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The Participation Forum*

February 23, 1995

Topic: Strategies for Community Change: Top-Down or Bottom-Up?

*How can donors promote participatory development in urban communities? Participants at the tenth session of the Participation Forum heard and discussed presentations that approached this question from two different directions. Kay Pyle of the Inter-American Foundation described the work of Brazilian NGOs that train members of poor communities to negotiate with local government and to develop initiatives of their own. Hal Minis, Senior Development Planner for the Center for International Development, Research Triangle Institute(RTI), described Ivory Coast's Municipal Development Support Project and the Tunisia-based Local Government Support Project—efforts aimed at strengthening the skills of both local government and community organizations to deal with each other. The session was kicked off by David Hales, Director of the Center for the Environment in the Global Bureau.
—Diane La Voy, Senior Policy Advisor for Participatory Development.*

Thinking About Participation in Decision Making

David Hales

I've spent a lot of time as a regulator, making decisions from the upper levels in an organization where, in politically correct terms, we would be "participation challenged." From my perspective as a decision maker, I think about issues of participation along four continuums. First, as environmentalists we have a sense of urgency because we realize how fast resources are being lost, but we also recognize that, to be sustainable, the decisions can't be just top-down. Second, as North Americans, we tend to want to depend on scientific expertise, but there are other forms of expertise that we should also bring in, though this may be more difficult. Third, there is the continuum that runs from a rational decision-making structure to what I might call a traditional structure. And finally, there's the continuum that deals with benefits and costs. Benefits are often in one sector and costs in another—or benefits are enjoyed by one group, and the costs paid, sometimes involuntarily, by another.

I suggest these points as guidance. First: decisions are almost always best made by those closest to the problem and those who have most to lose as the result of a decision-making process. Second:

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choices don't exist unless those who are involved in the decision process perceive them to exist. Finally, the most useful skill that anyone involved in a decision process can cultivate is the skill of listening.

An NGO-Centered Strategy in Recife, Brazil

Kay Pyle

Recife, in northeast Brazil, provides a case study of how NGOs and community associations can affect public policy. It's a poor city, with 800,000 of its 1.3 million inhabitants living in *favellas*. At the same time, it has a propitious environment for community participation. In part, this reflects Brazil's 1988 constitution, which has led to regulations that city plans must be made with community participation. In addition, Recife is located in a region with a history of community participation and has a sympathetic government, a mayor who has voiced commitments to the community and involved NGO leaders in his government.

We decided to support community efforts by funding clusters of NGOs, which are numerous in the region. We felt that this would have a larger, "sum is greater than its parts" effect. We've supported at least 10 to 15 groups over the past six or seven years. They all work on something slightly different, but there's a great deal of collaboration in spirit as well as on specific projects.

The result is an impressive community-participation record in Recife. NGOs are providing training for city workers such as teachers and education department supervisors and have been asked to staff a number of city departments. An advisory group, required by the constitution, meets every two weeks to address issues related to the city plan. An organization composed of five NGOs monitors land use legislation that impacts the poor and holds special meetings to monitor public budgets. Other institutional networks in Recife involve community leaders as well as NGOs.

People's Perceptions of Democratic Participation. Citizen participation takes education and organization—just how much came to light in a survey of citizens and community leaders carried out by one of the NGOs. People were asked about community participation and democracy, and it turned out there was a great deal of confusion. First, people often equated democracy with jobs, decent salaries, housing, and social services. Second, residents had a low level of community participation; less than 20 percent participated in any kind of community organization. Third, they saw participation as a way to get services, rather than as a way to shape public policies and practices. Fourth, they defined participation as voting; that is, they elect their officials and that constitutes participation, even though the officials may buy votes or use their offices strictly for patronage. People did not see participation as coming through institutional channels.

In summary, the researchers concluded that the most important law of a democratic country is not the constitution but the law of survival. One-third of the residents and leaders felt that the military period, for instance, was better than the current democracy because they got better services and the economy was stronger. This illustrates that NGOs and neighborhood organizations need to understand the perceptions of low-income people and to change those perceptions—this is really key to promoting democratic participation.

Empowering Neighborhoods through Information. One community research NGO in Recife, ETAPAS, has developed a model of action-oriented participatory research involving residents associations in low-income neighborhoods. Typically, the neighborhood will ask for help and ETAPAS will go out and train people how to do socio-demographic surveys, how to determine the number of schools, residents, electric lights, paved streets, bars, churches—everything about the neighborhood.

ETAPAS tabulates the results and incorporates them in illustrated, easy-to-read booklets. These are then given to the community, and a seminar is held on the findings. The community uses the findings in negotiations with the city, in meetings, and in efforts to organize itself around various issues.

Using income figures, the surveyors learned not only that hunger was a major problem in this neighborhood, but where the hungry lived. To meet the immediate crisis, the community arranged for local supermarkets to donate food and the residents association to distribute it to the poorest families. To address the problem in a longer-term way through job creation, women with dressmaking skills were organized, and a community-run credit fund granted them a loan to get started in business. These women are now marketing their wares.

In another ETAPAS survey, transportation was identified as a major problem: the community was located on top of a big hill and the bus route was at the bottom. The walk to the bus was long and sometimes dangerous, running through a high-crime area that was subject to mudslides during the rainy season. Using the survey, the community negotiated with the secretary of transportation to have the bus come to the top of the hill. This seems like a simple solution, but it didn't happen until these people did the survey, got organized, and decided to negotiate.

Time-Consuming but Effective. I'll summarize the pluses and pitfalls, or challenges, of an NGO-centered strategy. A major challenge is that we don't live in the community. It takes a lot of effort on the part of the funder to make good decisions at the community level. It's a time-consuming, labor-intensive process for community residents to begin to understand the potential of participation. But development takes place over time and requires ongoing support.

On the plus side, as outsiders, we are in a better position to mobilize the various actors to work together. Moreover, this kind of development is substantial, meaningful, effective, long-lasting, and has a good cost benefit. It also avoids providing money to governments, which can be ineffectual because of either corruption, negligence, or inept management.

Strategies to Make Local Government More Participatory

Hal Minis

I'd like to talk about facilitating participation in urban development. How do we help promote a more participatory process, what are the intervention points, and who should our partners be?

Government and Citizens. The general framework that we're using at RTI, drawn from several of our project experiences, comprises on one side local government, which includes the elected officials and the staff who implement policy and provide services, and on the other side citizens, who may represent themselves individually, in groups, or through NGOs. Local governments deliver services that should respond to what the citizens want, and the citizens judge whether their streets are paved, their garbage is collected, and so forth. Local government can also provide information about its budget, resource allocations, and local conditions. Participation takes different forms: the electoral process; tax payment or nonpayment; administrative procedures or partnerships set up by the local government.

In a complex, sophisticated participatory environment, lots of channels of communication exist. Where we work, local government is fairly closed and there are very few channels of participation. Our objective has been to build these channels.

One basic strategy is to build communication linkages going both ways, from the community to the local government and from the local government back to the community. Although this is a function of the legal framework, more and more we're finding that participation really takes place

through the discretionary powers of a local government. What counts is the number and types of meetings held by the local government, how and where the meetings are held, the kinds of public hearings that are held, and the number of citizen commissions that are established. In Tunisia, where we're doing a lot of work, the municipal councils generally meet three or four times a year. In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the council meets four or five times a month, and in the evening, so citizens can attend.

The other basic strategy is to strengthen the capacities of both sides—government and citizens—to engage in a process. This involves both skills and behaviors.

Ivory Coast Experience. We worked for several years in the secondary cities of the Ivory Coast attempting to strengthen municipal capacity and open municipal processes. Our focus was on local government because this was where the chief constraints lay. The mayors were not accustomed to public meetings. Consultations took place through the political party. The service directors had the prerogative to deliver services the way they wanted. People were not aware of potential ways of developing partnerships between the community and the local government. Neither the mayor nor his staff had the tools to engage in that kind of dialogue.

In the small cities in which we worked, we took a multifaceted approach to developing more participatory mechanisms. Mayors in Francophone Africa have a lot of power, so we focused on increasing the mayor's awareness of the need for participation. There were conferences for the federation of mayors on techniques for building confidence between local government and citizens. We sent teams to individual cities to meet with the mayor and the staff and discuss the city's problems and the potential benefits of participation. We trained staff on budgeting, resource mobilization, and provision of services. At the same time, teams of social workers carried out neighborhood assessments, both to increase local awareness about neighborhood conditions and to learn about needs and complaints. Small booklets and slide shows were developed to promote awareness of the results. Finally, for the first time in many cases, open public meetings were held that brought elected officials and staff together with community members. Afterwards, the municipalities were asked to develop an action plan.

Consultation with municipalities served not only to increase their awareness and gain commitment but also to get access to town resources such as trucks or a meeting place. Working with communities resulted in increasing the community's awareness about how they could interact with the municipality.

This process has produced a variety of results. For example, in one small town, community awareness of garbage collection problems led to the establishment of a youth association which collected garbage in the neighborhoods and left it in central locations for municipal pick up. This greatly improved sanitation and gave work to some of the unemployed youth. Elsewhere, a municipality provided support to a women's NGO to carry out sanitation activities, after the mayor learned of the group's interest in becoming involved. In a third example, market vendors and slaughterhouse operators came to an agreement with the municipality after a dramatic scene at a public meeting. The authorities, noting that the butchers' payments were low compared to other cities, had asked the butchers to pay their slaughterhouse fees. The butchers got up, left the meeting, caucused, and returned with the proposition that if the services in the slaughterhouse—lighting and waste removal—were improved, they would pay their fees. This was the first time that the market vendors and slaughterhouse operators had ever talked to the municipality about their needs, and the upshot was that the improvements were included in the budget and the capital investment plan.

The approach of involving NGOs, private-sector interests, market vendors, transporters, butchers, and the like with the local government officials and staff has proved very successful in Ivory Coast. It has now been expanded to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea, using local consultants trained in the Ivory Coast.

Tunisia and Beyond. In Tunisia, the Local Government Support Project aims to improve local governance through community participation and improvement of municipal capability to implement policy decisions. We are working with the Federation of Tunisian Cities to produce a guide on municipal management practices and a newsletter and to plan a conference on working with neighborhood organizations. We're also beginning a national training program for municipal staff. We did a study that showed that Tunisia has very few NGOs in urban areas.

In two pilot cities, which are really laboratories for innovation and participatory approaches, the kick-off activity was a day-long participation roundtable, which brought together elected officials, staff, and representatives of local NGOs. This was the first time that the three had gathered to discuss the benefits and the obstacles to partnerships between the local government and local NGOs. I was amazed at the level of interest and the participation—the amount of discussion and the number of ideas that emerged.

We are also planning an observational tour in the United States for teams from these pilot cities, and we intend to provide ongoing assistance once participatory activities get underway. One major activity is CIMEP—Community Involvement in Managing Environmental Pollution—an approach that includes community involvement in identifying environmental problems, municipal and NGO staff training, and discussions by all parties of problems, both at the local and the national levels.

Just as Ivory Coast has been the laboratory for West Africa, so many of the Tunisian activities have been the laboratory for broader activities in the Near East North Africa (NENA) region. USAID's Regional Housing and Urban Development (RHUDO) Program has sponsored activities at a regional level which aim at the same objective. A regional conference in Cairo last September focused on participation theory and policy. A second Cairo conference in June will focus on implementation. A regional governance and democracy study is examining the status of participation activities in these other countries, based on the Tunisia framework. There will be follow-up in some countries, networking and information sharing, and probably another CIMEP activity in a second country. Using the lessons learned from Tunisia, we're trying to create momentum for a participatory approach in the entire region.

To summarize, if you work at the local level, particularly in an urban setting, it's critical to work with NGOs *and* with the local government. Obstacles to participation exist on both sides, and both must work together to have effective participatory approaches.

Discussion Section

Trust, Expectations, and Time

Bachir Souhal: In the World Bank, we find that participatory approaches require building trust and raising expectations in the local communities and institutions. Our approach is to be frank with the local population. For example, in a project with Bedouin in Egypt, we say that the project is just a drop of water in the desert; that it could be used to blossom flowers; but there will have to be the bees if they want to harvest any honey. The message is clear that a process has been started to prepare the project and that it's their responsibility to carry it out. Each community has a kind of contract with the project if they want to participate, so there is no paternalism.

Diane LaVoy: The case you cite is described in the *World Bank Sourcebook on Participation*, isn't it? I'd like people to be aware of this resource, which will be in final form in a few months.

Bachir Souhal: Yes, exactly. I titled it, "Gaining by Losing Control"—which means a lot.

Audience: In USAID, we also must address the implications of building expectations as we're building trust. As times become more uncertain, are we really going to be there, in those communities, participating at the level we now anticipate?

Tony Marcil: Some projects shouldn't be undertaken at all if they can't remain in place for a certain period of time. At the World Environment Center, we had two projects with five- and three-year commitments, because that was judged, in consultation with USAID, the period necessary to make the activities self-sufficient. But after one year in one case, and two in the other, USAID decided to withdraw from the country. Very, very small amounts of money were involved. If we had been talking about $10 million, they would have listened because it would have made sense to do the paperwork to be able to stay there.

La Voy: That's a painful and relevant point as we continue to close USAID missions.

Peter Gottert: Our experience as the Academy for Educational Development running nutrition communications projects in West Africa has been that there was so much emphasis on showing results in extremely short periods of time, that this Forum comes as a complete breath of fresh air. In fact, we did show that working in a participatory manner not only created the most trust, but also brought about the greatest change between baseline and final evaluation surveys.

Win/Lose Situations

Derick Brinkerhoff: Most of the cases discussed seem like win-win situations, where everybody comes out ahead. What happens when there are heavy costs, when some people are losers?

Pyle: In Recife, a developer wanted to build a hotel on a point of land that was already being used by a community of fishermen. The hotel would have provided jobs and tourism and the city approved the project. The fishermen, however, were concerned about the environmental impact and acquired help from an expert in environmental mapping from one of our NGOs. Hearings were held, the hotel complex has not been built, but no final resolution has been reached either. It may not work out the way one party or the other wants it, but what was important was the atmosphere of negotiation, that all the people were at the table.

NGOs or Governments?

Mike Lippe: I'd like Kay Pyle to say more about her statement that supporting NGOs "avoids providing money to governments." Do you really believe that money should not go to governments, only to NGOs?

Pyle: No, I think that government is very important. And although our money at the IAF typically does not go to government, our grants go to NGOs in communities like Recife with potential for collaboration with the government. We think that's the model of greatest return.
La Voy: The strong NGOs in Brazil that are grantees of the IAF in some ways carry out the functions that RTI would be carrying out with USAID funding. They are purveyors of that nice mix of social and technical expertise, and they call in other experts as necessary. Local NGOs have the advantage of on-the-ground knowledge and, presumably, the potential for sustainability in their society.

On the other hand, they may be locked into the limits of their own knowledge, approach, and previous struggles and may not be able to bring a fresh look.

I'd like to ask Hal how RTI expects its work to last if they are not cloning themselves into local institutions of some sort? And similarly, Kay, how does IAF deal with the issue of sustainability?

Minis: Human resource development has to be a fundamental aspect of the project so that the people who are participating in it learn the necessary skills and techniques. Also, a facilitative approach, with a lot of consultation among all the concerned parties at all levels, is key to having people take over the approach themselves.

Pyle: Although the IAF may have to bring in the technical skills, they don't remain behind unless a training component is built into the project. On the other hand, in our approach, the people we work with are there after the project is over.

Learning North-South or South-South

Gary Hartshorn: Hal, you mentioned participatory tours to the United States. We in the environmental community have had a lot of success doing south-south interchanges, and it would seem to me that holds great potential when you're dealing with participatory efforts and capacity building. Are you doing that?

Minis: In the Tunisia-based project, we've opted for a U.S. study tour because the examples are so much richer here, even though the context is much different. But I agree that in many cases the south-south exchange is very critical, and that's certainly the approach we used in West Africa. We had tours to the Ivory Coast, for example, from Mali, Senegal, and Guinea.

Effects of Past Development Work

William Miner: In both Tunisia and Brazil, there is a history of USAID local development work back in the '60s and '70s. Did you find residuals of this work, and did it help or hinder the newer efforts?

[Editor: neither speaker could identify specific effects. We invite readers to consider the question and send their observations.]

Slogans of Partnership?

William Visser: We tend to take for granted that participation is a good thing. But in my own experience, I find some incisive criticism of the whole notion coming from academic sources, NGOs, and honest and good government people in developing countries. The argument goes like this: "Listen: We're not accustomed to democracy. Basic breakthroughs are taking place, and we're trying to strengthen our own democratic processes. Then along come development assistance organizations with these slogans of partnerships and participation, which basically circumvent the rules and the changes that we have established constitutionally. Is it possible that we are imposing new notions on the south?

Pyle: Since the IAF responds to proposals from community groups, the ideas come from them as far as I know. With the opening of democracy and increased democratization, we began getting proposals for the type of projects I discussed today.

La Voy: It's an important point, but the problem is least likely to occur in cases like IAF, which funds unsolicited proposals and judges them on the longstanding track record of the proponent organization. The real question is whether the NGOs coming forward may undercut local government or represent some sort of alternative to representative democracy. In general, the NGOs that I've known most are certainly not doing this. They're trying to strengthen democratic government. Many of the NGOs see their roles as organizing, facilitating, strengthening the voice of people, helping them communicate as citizens within existing governmental structures.

Hales: I would like to comment on the concern that we're imposing participation on people. I heard that criticism most often about the civil rights movement in the South in this country. You can hear it wherever entrenched interests feel threatened by those who would look for effective sharing of power. I would be a little bit suspicious of the motives behind this concern.

Minis: Certainly, participation is a slogan to a certain extent. But in West Africa, in Ivory Coast particularly, everyone realized that there was a tremendous institutional crisis. The mayors we were working with knew that their cities were in serious trouble and they needed to find a new approach. They entered into the process with some trepidation. But when they saw that garbage collection was better, that municipal revenues increased, they agreed that it was a better approach. Tunisia is still a highly centralized country that is facing a delicate political situation, and it's going to remain centralized. We're trying to adapt the idea of participation and governance to their context. Let them take the parts they want. If it means working slowly with a couple of NGOs, fine. But clearly there is a demand.

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Communications from the E-mail Bag

Strategies, Challenges, and Practices in Participatory Urban Development

Steven Sharp: Local Government and NGOs—Complementary Roles. "Community decision making can be achieved by mobilizing the energies of both local government and NGOs. Both have clearly defined roles—local government for service delivery and land-use planning, and NGOs for mobilizing citizens around the common issues. In many USAID countries, local government is an ineffectual extension of central government, and NGOs often fill a vacuum in service delivery and articulation of local needs. The issue is not whether USAID should fund urban services or NGO operations—it cannot do either in a sustainable manner. Rather, USAID should target those areas in the relationships between the two to enable a participatory process for community decision making. NGOs have a role in mobilizing citizen participation to make the local government accountable to the citizens. And, for people to have a stake in their government, it must be seen as a means of making their lives better."

Claude Salem: "Jump-Starting" Participation by Strengthening Local Institutions: "The following preliminary conclusions grew out of World Bank monitoring of six community-based pilot projects in Manila and Kathmandu focusing on water and sanitation and on waste disposal.

1. "The municipal (institutional) framework is often the most intractable constraint to effective community action planning: the fragmented and deteriorated state of relations between elected officials and the informal community leadership structures constitutes a first line of resistance to any kind of concerted discussion and/or action.

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2. "It is not always clear that the NGOs (or community-based organizations or users' associations)
    represent the communities beyond their immediate membership—or even their own leadership.
    Work with these groups is still effective, but concern remains that 'community action plans,'
    which are often derived through a less than representative process, may not be sustainable in a
    longer perspective.

"These findings lead to the idea that preliminary actions could be taken to revitalize the role of
local institutions that are at loggerheads or lack strong 'vital signs' in order to 'jump-start'
participation. My question is whether external agencies can effectively assess the presence or
absence of such social vitality. And if we can't, what is the gap and how do we assist in filling
it?

"In the 1960s and 1970s, Africa was rife with models and pilot projects in 'community
development' and 'animation rurale'—approaches which basically assumed that the rural,
traditional communities needed to be awakened, organized, made to evolve, etc. These moddels
failed because they did not recognize the multifaceted persistence of traditional societies. It is most
likely that public life existed where external observers failed to see it.

"First, we must acknowledge the existence of such complex underlying social realities in urban
communities. We must then assist fragmented community segments into finding their respective
niche in a nascent public area. Working with public officials, while only part of the answer, can
often be more helpful in encouraging community action than initiating direct work with or by
NGOs to the exclusion of a role for these officials.

"Environmental conditions in urban communities have so deteriorated that development actions
need to be more modest, concrete, deliverable in a short time frame, and sustainable over the long
term. This is a tall order: to put 'product' and 'process' in a symbiotic relationship rather than as
competing options. Yet this is exactly what the communities we monitored were insistent on
doing: ensuring that 'action on a product' (some kind of implementation activity) was concurrent
with the establishment of a 'consultation process'—a kind of good faith gesture reflecting the
external agents' trust in the community's judgment of what is in their own best interest."

**Robert Herman: History Makes Participation a Big Challenge in Russia and Other ENI
Countries.** "In contrast to the survey referred to by one of the speakers on local attitudes about
democracy, in Russia and many of the other ENI countries that have made headway in political
reform, citizens are not so much ill-informed as cynical. For many, perhaps a majority, democracy
has become synonymous with political disorder, social upheaval, and declining economic fortunes.
Moreover, with the dominant perception that the locus of causation in their lives is completely
external and with a strong culture of dependence/paternalism, there is little institutional basis on
which to foster a participatory ethic."

Richard Cornelius: Participation a Must in Population CBD Projects. "In the population
sector, operations research suggests that community participation is important in setting up
sustainable systems for community-based distribution (CBD) of contraceptives. Evidence suggests
that CBD systems that are designed and imposed from the outside may achieve short-term gains in

contraceptive use, but they tend to require heavy financial and technical input from the outside, and are not sustainable. For example, communities may not be willing to provide any financial support to CBD workers, making it difficult for such workers to take time off from productive activities to do contraceptive education and distribution. On the other hand, when community leaders and women are consulted early on concerning the need and involved in designing the program, they are more likely to get behind an effort to train and support CBD workers."

Kristin Loken: A Problem-Focused Approach. "Often local governments are just as weak as the civil society organizations. Providing assistance to NGOs for programs at the local level without involving local governments undercuts that local government's ability to govern and the community's ability to decide priorities for itself. When our objectives include decentralization, we need to strengthen partnerships between citizens, local businesses, community groups, and local governments. This will require assistance in improved management (public and private), training in participatory practices and decision making, and improved information access, analysis, and utilization. Such assistance can't be carried out without a problem-focused approach.

"In the 1985 CRS Health Education project in the West Bank, villages that wanted health educators were required first to organize a town council (if they didn't have one) and then to decide how they would help pay for (a very small) portion of the program. It always amazed us how, once the village got this part organized, they were off and running. Within six more months, they'd have a kindergarten or a generator or whatever else they decided they wanted next. The key was to get that initial community decision-making process working.

"I'm new here in El Salvador, but as I understand it, through our Municipalities in Action Program, open community meetings are being held for the first time in some municipalities. It has just started and there's still a gap between an open discussion and actual participation in decision making. These meetings, which are a requirement for access to certain public resources and USAID project support, are problem-focused. To date, the program has focused more on the local government side of the partnership, but our next amendment (now under design) will increase support for nongovernmental participation as well." (**Michael Deal** also sent E-mail about this program. He notes that the open town meetings in nearly all of the 262 municipalities "fostered a strong sense of accountablity in locally-elected officials.")

Timothy Alexander: Best Practices on Participatory Urban Development. "In Indonesia, the first efforts to integrate community participation in urban development activities occurred as part of the *Kampung* Involvement Program (KIP). The program concentrated on upgrading or providing new microlevel infrastructure to low-income urban communities. A *kampung* committee is consulted on priorities and on the layout of services. In 1991, the KIP program in Jakarta began a major effort to expand the role of community organizations by introducing use of memoranda of understanding between district-level officials, or *Lurahs*, and citizen committees, in setting priorities for infrastructure improvements. Success in overcoming an authoritarian culture, central planning style, and budget-cycle-driven orientation of local governments has varied widely. Most recently, in about 10 *kelurahans*, NGOs have begun to train local government officials on how to organize local leadership groups.

"In the Philippines, a key component of the USAID-supported Community Mortgage Program is the organization of community associations that enable their members to obtain mortgages for the

purchase and development of their home sites. Over 300 communities with over 35,000 families have already benefitted and the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation is actively working with NGOs to expand and improve the program.

"RHUDO/Jakarta recently engaged a consultant to solicit community views of infrastructure priorities. The consultancy aimed at ensuring that infrastructure proposals favored by the community would be incorporated in the municipality of Tasikmalaya's (West Java) capital investment plan. The analysis demonstrated that the local community was willing and able to prioritize needed infrastructure services, that the consultative process improved the siting of proposed facilities, and that participatory practices helped to motivate the community to take increased responsibility for maintenance of the new facilities. However, the consultant found that people at the local level expected compensation for participating in what they regarded as a governmental function and that such payments were not an established budget item."

Deborah Prindle: The Long View. "In 1984, I designed the first multi-year local government training program in managing community development and working with community groups for Ivory Coast. It's nice to see that the work not only bore fruit but is a model for community participation."

Sigifredo Ramirez: The Case for Focus on Local Government. "As Hal Minis said, obstacles for participation exist on both sides (NGOs and local governments). However, a well-oriented and -trained local government is the more productive, and projects with local governments are more effective and sustainable. NGOs have neither permanency nor 'loyalty' to the community; once the project is completed and/or the funds are exhausted, the implementing NGO disappears. The local authority is always there. The need is to place more trust in the local authorities, provide them with the necessary training and technical assistance, and teach them how to work with their communities in a more effective manner.

"Until I had the opportunity to work with local governments, I believed that it was very difficult to achieve anything through them. Working with them over the past 15 years has shown me how wrong I was. Local governments in developing countries need three basic elements: working capital, training and technical assistance, and trust. If we can achieve those three elements, we can guarantee local development and effective community participation."